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December 2015

GIPSA *news*

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE GRAIN INSPECTION, PACKERS AND STOCKYARDS ADMINISTRATION EMPLOYEES

Just Who Do We Think We Are? A Few Reflections on the Season as the Year Winds Down.

By Larry Mitchell

WASHINGTON— I'm not overly sentimental this time of the year. Wishing for a brighter tomorrow is all right every now and then, but it just isn't enough to get the job done during tough times and periods of volatility in agriculture markets. It takes dedicated effort every day. That's the nature of agriculture. It's challenging making a profit in a business where the unpredictability of nature can wipe out a crop right before your eyes. Farming and ranching is clearly not for the faint of heart.



While production agriculture was the bright spot during the recession that hit our nation hard eight years ago, times and markets have changed. USDA's recent report, the 2015 edition of *Rural America at a Glance* shows that rural areas continue to experience population loss, higher poverty rates, and lower educational attainment than urban America.

In spite of these challenges, the nation's economy as a whole continues to climb—modestly as we recover. Over the last five years the unemployment rate has fallen across our country. Secretary Vilsack recently commented that rural America is on the road to recovery and cited some promising trends: "Rural employment has increased and some counties experienced population growth. The childhood poverty rate declined by one percentage point," he said. The secretary also highlighted the need for continued investment in rural people and places by highlighting USDA efforts targeted at improving rural growth and opportunity.

Some observers are quick to point to the nation's net farm income as the lowest since 2002. Commodity prices are low and there's high demand for agricultural loans as farmers struggle. Today's grain prices barely bring in enough to pay for basic operating costs like fertilizer, seed, and land rent. For some producers crop prices are insufficient to make payments on equipment loans or enough to pay farmers for their own labor. Adhering to this single-mindedness doesn't display the true backbone of America's agricultural community when times are hard.

Continued on page 2

A Few Reflections on the Season as the Year Winds Down (continued)

Here's to the Spirit of America's Farmers and Ranchers

Looking back at the past year resilience might be a better way of defining who we really are as America's farmers and ranchers. It brings to mind lessons of hope and promise from the season. Those who call rural America home evoke a spirit of determination and quiet pride in their labor that spans generations. They're persistent, seek innovation, and know instinctively which road can lead to recovery. Farmers and ranchers are unapologetically rugged and the truest form of optimists as they plan for the coming year's planting and calving seasons.

Auld Lang Syne is not in my holiday repertoire, but as the year winds down I'd like to share a thought or two about how GIPSA fit into the 2015 rural picture through the services we provide our stakeholders.



The highpoint arrived September 30, when the president signed into law the Agriculture Reauthorizations Act of 2015, which included provisions to extend the five expiring provisions of the U.S. Grain Standards Act (USGSA).

These provisions give producers, handlers, marketers, buyers, and consumers an opportunity to provide input regarding the official inspection system. More importantly, the authorities of the USGSA, including the reauthorized provisions, are critical to GIPSA's mission to ensure that the grain we export continues to meet the highest of standards expected by our international trading customers so that international markets remain open to U.S. farmers.

American producers raise some of the best products in the world, and provide the economic vitality to help our rural communities create prosperity so that they are self-sustaining, repopulating and economically viable.

In 2014, the national grain inspection system provided over 3.31 million inspections on 297.9 million metric tons of grain with a value of over \$45 billion. In that same year FGIS-inspected grain exports totaled 3,138,800,000 bushels (82.6 million metric tons) at a costs of only one cent per bushel for that essential service.

It may be a time for high fives, but that's also not our nature. We don't rock on our heels or celebrate with loud parties after a harvest. Instead, we just keep going. No—I'm not too sentimental. On New Year's eve I'll just enjoy a bowl of black-eyed peas, raise my glass, and toast the hard labor of rural America. And maybe add a verse or two from Robert Burn's old rhetorical song. Here's to the spirit of America's farmers and ranchers.



GIPSA Idea Hotline

GIPSA Idea Hotline is open for business.
Please send your suggestions or ideas to
GIPSA-Ideas@usda.gov; fax them to 202-690-2173; or
telephone them to 1-800-455-3447 or 202-720-7045.

It is best to send them via fax or email to reduce the possibility of transcription errors;





FGIS Matters

By Randall Jones, GIPSA Headquarters, Washington, D.C.

Fond Farewell to Retiring New Orleans and League City Field Office Managers

The end of the calendar year typically brings a number of retirements and this year is not any different. Kerry Petit, New Orleans Field Office Manager, and Dave Grady, League City Field Office Manager, decided that after more than 80 years of combined experience in grain inspection it is time to move on.

Mr. Petit and Mr. Grady have been instrumental in building Federal Grain Inspection Service into the premier grain inspection program in the world and the Gold Standard in our industry. Their legacies will be remembered long after their careers have concluded and we will forever be indebted to their contributions. Their commitment to staff, to stakeholders and to our mission never wavered for nearly four decades.

The Gulf of Mexico serves as the primary gateway to the world for U.S. grain and commodities and those two gentlemen ensured that our export operations served our customers and met the needs of U.S. agriculture. Their impact to our organization is immense as grain moves through the Gulf to ports around the world. We are deeply thankful that nearly 40 years ago Mr. Petit and Mr. Grady chose FGIS. I wish them and all our retirees continued success along their future journeys.

Puerto Rico Career Fair

Ms. Kendra Kline, Assistant to the Deputy Administrator, and Mr. Emill Chinae-Perez from the Toledo Field Office, traveled to Puerto Rico December 3-4 to participate in a USDA recruitment event at the University of Puerto Rico in Mayaguez.

FGIS advertised two jobs under the Recent Graduates Program and received 67 resumes and transcripts for the positions of agricultural engineer and agricultural commodity grader.

Other USDA agencies advertising during the event included the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, the Agricultural Marketing Service, the Natural Resources Conservation Service, Food Safety and Inspection Service, and Rural Development.



LEAGUE CITY, TEXAS—Mr. Dave Grady, field office manager, displays a farewell gift from colleagues. More stories and photos of GIPSA retirees on pages 4-8. (USDA Photo)

GIPSA Employees in the News

FGIS League City Texas Legend Dave Grady Retires

LEAGUE CITY, Texas—Mr. Dave Grady, an institution at the Federal Grain Inspection Service (FGIS) office in eastern Texas for nearly four decades retires this month.

Mr. Grady worked at the FGIS Pasadena/Houston Field Office from 1977 to 1986, and served in a variety of assignments with many accomplishments throughout his federal career including: field office manager at the League City Field Office from 2009 – 2015; and as assistant field office manager, from 2003 – 2009; field office manager, Canada from 1999 – 2003; head of the Oil and Seed Program, and the Standards & Procedures Branch from 1996 -1999. From 1988-1995 Mr. Grady was a senior board member at the Board of Appeal and Review in the Kansas City Field office where he also worked as a quality assurance specialist from 1986 – 1988. He was a quality assurance specialist shift supervisor at the Pasadena/Houston Field Office from 1980 – 1986.



Mr. Grady receives a USDA plaque as a memento from office colleagues. (USDA Photo by Melanie Schwemer)

During his final year serving as the FGIS Field Office Manager in League City he oversaw all grading, weighing, and certification of grain-related products and ensured compliance with inspection and weighing of U.S. grains throughout ports in the Gulf of Mexico including facilities in Galveston, Houston, Beaumont, Corpus Christi, and Harlingen.

During his tenure with the Board of Appeal and Review in Kansas City, Mr. Grady was responsible for the quality of official grain, rice, pulse inspections and grading activities. He established a program to take prompt and appropriate actions in addressing inter-market grading problems. Mr. Grady also spent part of his career in Washington, D.C. developing regulations, enforcing policies, procedures, and providing litigation support.



NGC Computer Champion Announces Retirement in 2016

KANSAS CITY, Mo.— Ms. Robin Rother recently announced she will retire from government service in February 2016 following a 30-year career during which she worked for several agencies, including the Federal Grain Inspection Service (FGIS) since 1988.

Ms. Rother recollects that when she started working at FGIS, “There were only two or three computers in the building and no local area network (LAN),” she said. FGIS continued to add computers. In 1987 she became the computer clerk and worked to finally install a LAN in the National Grain Center (NGC) facility in Kansas City.

Today there are more than 150 computers throughout NGC. Ms. Rother keeps them functioning and updated with current images and software. She also maintains servers, phones, door entry systems, building cameras, and some 20-25 network printers.

“I have seen a lot, from DOS to Windows 3.1, Windows 95, and all the operating systems along the way. There have been a lot of changes,” she said. Future plans include views from another window. Ms. Rother and her husband Rick plan on purchasing a trailer followed by plenty of travel checking out the sites around the USA with their dog Maggie.

GIPSA Employees in the News

Retirement Announcements from FGIS at the Big Easy

Ms. Sarah Welch-Hill Retires After 37 Years



**Ms. Sarah Welch-Hill,
Supervisory Commodity
Grader**

NEW ORLEANS—Ms. Sarah Welch-Hill retires January 3 following 37 years of federal service. She worked as a Supervisory Commodity Grader at the New Orleans Field office.

Ms. Welch-Hill began her career with the Federal Government May 14, 1978 as an Agricultural Commodity Grader at the Lutcher Field Office. She was later promoted to Supervisory Agricultural Commodity Grader in August of 2008 at the New Orleans Field Office and remained in that position throughout her career.

For many years Ms. Welch-Hill was a CPR and First Aid Training instructors at the New Orleans Field office. Upon retirement she plans on babysitting her grandchildren.

Mr. Mark Reimer Retires After 29 Years

NEW ORLEANS— Mr. Mark Reimer, Agricultural Commodity Technician for the New Orleans Field Office, retires December 31 following 29 years of federal service with the U.S. Department of Agriculture and the Federal Grain Inspection Service.

Mr. Reimer's federal career began November 6, 1986 and was based out of his duty station in Destrehan, La. (currently the New Orleans Field Office.)

He was born and raised in New Orleans and graduated from South Eastern Louisiana University, Hammond, La. in 1983 with a Bachelor of Science Degree in Accounting and a minor in Biological Sciences.

Mr. Reimer said he plans to travel using his underutilized Lincoln town car, and possibly renovate a local historic home, and maybe some old cars.



**Mr. Mark Reimer,
Agricultural Commodity
Technician**



Mr. Kerry Petit retires after 38 Years

NEW ORLEANS—Mr. Kerry Petit, Field Office Manager for the New Orleans Field Office, retires January 2 following 38 years of federal service with the U.S. Department of Agriculture. He began his career December 4, 1977 when he accepted a position as an agricultural commodities grader following the federal takeover of South Louisiana Grain Services (SLGS) where he performed all official inspection and weighing activities. He was licensed by FGIS to grade all grains and quickly advanced to the assistant chief inspector position when SLGS began providing official inspection and weighing services in 1975 at the Cargill Terre Haute grain elevator in Reserve, La.

Mr. Petit graduated from Nicholls State University, Thibodeaux, La. in 1972 with a Bachelor of Arts Degree in psychology with a minor in economics. He and his wife Deborah were married in 1975 and have two sons, a daughter, and four grandchildren who all live in the local area. Mr. Petit plans to travel, enjoy sporting activities, spend more time with his family, and continue honing his computer skills. His children and grandchildren are already planning to keep him active with extra baby-sitting duty. Back at the office the staff remains hopeful that he will be available periodically for mentoring and continued guidance from the many lessons that he mastered during his tenure with Grain Inspection, Packers and Stockyards Administration.

GIPSA Employees in the News

Mr. Jim Lambert Announces Retirement, Shifts Gears to the Open Road

KANSAS CITY, Mo.—Some folks just know when its time to hit the road in style. A proud biker, veteran, and federal employee with over 41 years of service, Mr. Jim Lambert will bid colleagues farewell next month as he rides his Harley-Davidson into the great retirement sunset, January 2.

Mr. Lambert gained his knowledge of computers during his four years in the U.S. Air Force where he analyzed and transmitted data and from England to Washington, DC. “At that time computers took up entire rooms,” he said.

After leaving the military in 1980, Mr. Lambert joined the Federal Grain Inspection Service in Portland, Oregon as a clerk typist. In those days Portland was an export field office and he recalls typing hundreds of certificates on a standard typewriter. That just wouldn't do for an inquisitive individual who enjoys tinkering with machines and turning wrenches, so Mr. Lambert decided to take an Amtex word processor and program it to automatically print certificates. That led him to experiment with a regular printer and configuring it to operate even faster. “That was the start of it all,” he said.

In 1987, Mr. Lambert migrated from Portland to Kansas City where he worked his way up the ranks as a computer programmer. He assisted with the development of the Local Area Network, helped several laboratories with data transfer systems, and connected instruments to computers using RS232 for real-time data collection.

Mr. Lambert moved to Falbrook, California in 2000 and continued to program and send the code back to Kansas City. Two years later he returned to Kansas City and joined the Application Development Branch. He also spent a few years working on the Swine Contract Library for the Packers & Stockyards. In December 2013, he was assigned to assist with the automation and programming side of the newly-acquired PerkinElmer LABWORKS LIMS where he played a major role in collecting data from instruments and developing the parsing for uploads into the new LIMS.

Mr. Lambert keeps more than bike wrenches in his tool kit and uses several computer languages to develop his programs, including Visual Basic and C Sharp. During his time at NGC he built distributed data bases that included NIRT, moisture laboratory, air oven tables, and the protein laboratory.



Mr. Jim Lambert prepares to hit the road on his Harley when he retires January 2. (USDA Photo by Ruth Goff)

New Orleans Field Office Earns Top Honor



WASHINGTON—The entire New Orleans Field Office staff was recently recognized for playing a dynamic role in ensuring the highest standards of America's export grain. Mr. Randall Jones, Federal Grain Inspection Service deputy administrator (**pictured on the left**) accepted the Administrator's Distinguished Group Award on behalf of the New Orleans staff from Mr. Larry Mitchell during a recent ceremony at USDA headquarters.

“While most of us have the luxury of celebrating holidays, in places like our New Orleans Field Office, where 65-75 percent of America's grain is exported, staff members regularly worked long shifts during heavy workloads. They endured personal hardships during natural disasters, and sometimes worked without days off for weeks as heavy grain tonnage passes through that busy port. I'm pleased to recognize all our employees in New Orleans for facing challenges with pride, dedication, and utmost professionalism to meet our agency's needs,” said Mr. Mitchell.

Closing a Storied Career with GIPSA

Ms. Joanne Peterson Retires Following 44 Years of Service at USDA

Washington— There were some pretty significant events going on in this town back in 1971. The war in Vietnam and protest marches seemed to dominate the evening news and newspapers. American astronauts kept prancing and even driving on the moon. The Pentagon Papers were circulating on real paper. President Richard Nixon certified the 26th amendment lowering the voting age to 18 and Ed Sullivan, iconic hipster, was entertaining on TV. The internet wasn't around, nor Facebook, tweets, Starbucks, or smartphones. (Go ahead, Google Ed Sullivan.)

Good times, eh? Ms. Joanne Peterson might agree. That summer while slugger Reggie Jackson was belting towering homeruns and construction at the World Trade Center was nearing completion, she was just beginning her career at USDA. She recalls transformations in the department as easily as turning pages in a history book.

“I’ve seen so many changes over the years, to name a few—from electric typewriters, carbon paper, typewriter erasers, and whiteout to computers; from redacting information using a black magic marker to redacting information using automated redaction tools; copying hundreds of pages of records and mailing the documents to converting the records in .pdf format and emailing the records; and from official inspection agencies providing grain inspection services at export locations to the mandatory inspection and weighing of export grain by Federal Grain Inspection Service (FGIS).”

“As an 18 year-old and three weeks after graduating from high school in 1971, I started my government job working with the Grain Division in Beltsville, Maryland,” she said. Five years later Ms. Peterson began working at the new grain inspection agency, the FGIS in 1976.

When FGIS and the Packers and Stockyards Administration merged into the Grain Inspection Packers and Stockyard Administration (GIPSA) in 1994 she began another chapter. “Little did I know at 18 that my first job was to develop into my career. Now, 44 years later, it’s time to hand over the Freedom of information Act (FOIA) Express and its redaction tools, my FOIA files, my Department of Justice FOIA handbook that I’ve highlighted and paper clipped pages and pages of guidelines, USDA’s new internal control program, GIPSA’s assessable function inventories and risk assessments, Privacy Act systems of records, weekly activity reports, and the FMFIA annual assurance statement to someone else after I retire,” she said.

Among the countless career hats in her federal wardrobe, Ms. Peterson proudly sorts through her inventory—clerk stenographer, secretary stenographer, grain marketing specialist, assistant to the director, budget, management analyst, FOIA Officer, Internal Control Officer, and Privacy Officer. “All have given me a sense of pride and accomplishment,” she said.

Ms. Peterson is undoubtedly a seasoned USDA veteran. “I certainly don’t consider myself old, but I’m one of the few *old timers* still hanging around. Rather than wearing out my welcome, I’d like to say goodbye to GIPSA—the only organization I have ever known—and to say goodbye to my co-workers, friends, and all the amazing people I’ve met along the way. I thank the Grain Division, FGIS, and everyone at GIPSA for my wonderful memories and the awesome career that I never imagined I would have had,” she said. Old? Hardly. Ms. Peterson instead charms like a historian eagerly sharing fascinating anecdotes about an organization woven into the fabric of a remarkable career.



GIPSA Employees in the News

Packers and Stockyards Program Bids Farewell to Longtime Member

Mr. Joe Moore Retires to Florida After More Than 33 Years With USDA



It's five o'clock somewhere. Mr. Joe Moore relaxes at home with one of his five parrots. (Photo courtesy of Mr. Joe Moore)

ATLANTA— It's finally time for Joe Moore, Business Practices Unit (BPU) Supervisor in the Packers and Stockyards Program Eastern Regional Office, to head south for ocean breezes and sand between his toes. Following a career that spanned more than 33 years, Mr. Moore will retire January 3 to a place with little traffic, few waiting lines, and where palms dot the landscapes instead of streets all named after peach trees.

Mr. Moore began his career with the U.S. Department of Agriculture as a meat grader in July 1982 after earning a degree in animal science from the University of Kentucky and concludes as the BPU Supervisor, an assignment he held since 2007.

During his early years Mr. Moore lived in Denver and Harrisonburg, Virginia, but after five years of dealing with cold weather, he decided to apply for a position with the Packers and Stockyards Administration's regional office in Atlanta and became a marketing specialist in July 1987. Mr. Moore survived an agency reorganization in 1998 and continued the rest of his career in Atlanta.

He plans to join his wife Celia, who also recently retired, and escape to their new home near St. Augustine, Florida along with their five parrots.

An avid outdoorsman, Mr. Moore's new agenda includes tennis, hunting, fishing, and kayaking. Florida's new resident also plans on taking it slow. "You might find me on the beach with the volunteer turtle patrol. I'm not going to

miss the alarm clock or the traffic, but I will miss the dedicated people in this agency," he said. Back in the office the staff is grateful for his long-time service, and wish him an enjoyable retirement. *[Editor's Note: Practically all references to Margaritaville, or other lyrics from Jimmy Buffett tunes were carefully omitted from this story.]*

Packers and Stockyards Staff Receive Administrator's Awards

WASHINGTON— Several members of the Packers and Stockyards Program received special recognition during an awards ceremony December 15 at USDA headquarters.

Mr. Steve Pappaducas was presented with the Administrator's Safety Award. The Superior Group Award went to the Packers and Stockyards National Meeting Committee with special mention to the following members for their dedication in planning and executing a very successful event: Julie Shamblin, Tim Johnson, Patti Tolle, Jody Boydston-Johnson, Bruce Gardner, Barnard England, Kristen Pirtle, J.C. Cannon, Doug Neesen, Cindy Bertoli, Brett Offutt, Magnolia Garcia, Gale Mason, Erica Nelson, and Gretchen Van Walbeek.



GIPSA Employees in the News

New Supervisors, Agricultural Commodity Technician, College Contest

NEW ORLEANS—The New Orleans Field Office recently welcomed the addition of four supervisory agricultural commodity graders, Mr. Charles Guidry, Mr. Brandon Harness, Mr. Courtney Trask, and Mr. Arthur Williams. Each supervisor is a participant or graduate of the Graduate School USA in Washington, D.C.

Mr. Guidry began his career as a technician at the Lutcher Field Office in 1986 and was assigned to work at various locations in the ensuing years including Corpus Christi, Texas, Los Angeles, League City and Brunswick, Texas. More recently Mr. Guidry was detailed to the Toledo, Ohio field office.

Mr. Guidry became an agricultural commodity grader (AGC) in 2007 and was tapped three years later for the Leadership Development Program. He brings more than 29 years experience to his new supervisory position.

Mr. Harness completed training at the Graduate School USA earlier this fall. “I’m excited to take on the responsibilities and challenges that come with the shift supervisor position. I also look forward to raising the bar for FGIS,” he said.

Mr. Trask is a graduate of Southern University in Baton Rouge, Louisiana where he majored in agricultural business. He began working intermittently for FGIS as an agricultural commodity technician in 2010 and soon advanced to an AGC assignment. Mr. Trask recently completed training in the New Leadership Program in Washington, D.C.

Mr. Arthur Williams started his career in 1986 as a summer intern and worked intermittently for three years until he was appointed as a full-time technician. He completed AGC training in 2010 and more recently traveled to Washington, D.C. for Graduate School USA training.

Mr. Londrae Murrell Joins BAR as Agricultural Commodity Technician



KANSAS CITY, Mo.—Mr. Londrae Murrell was recently selected for assignment as an Agricultural Commodity Technician with the Equipment Branch of the Board of Appeals and Review.

Mr. Murrell began his career in grain inspection in 2006 with the Missouri Department of Agriculture sampling inbound hopper railcars at the local Cargill elevator as well as several other service points in the vicinity.

He later worked for the Kansas Grain Inspection Service in 2007 where he continued gaining experience and knowledge in grain inspection processes. Mr. Murrell joined the USDA family in 2010. Since then he worked for the Inspection Instrumentation Branch as well as the Board of Appeals and Review.



KANSAS CITY, Mo.—Students from nine universities participated in the 82nd American Royal Collegiate Crops Contest last month at the National Grain Center. More than 40 students competed for scholarship awards in categories including plant and seed identification, grain grading, and seed analysis. Kansas State University topped this year’s list. NGC hosts the annual event sponsored by the CHS Foundation, American Society of Agronomy, DuPont Pioneer, and the South Dakota Crop Improvement Association. (USDA Photo by Ruth Goff)

GIPSA Employees in the News

National Grain Center Congratulates Austyn Hughes, April Johnson



KANSAS CITY, Mo.—Mr. Austyn Hughes and Ms. April Johnson were recently selected as Operations Research Analysts for the Quality Assurance and Compliance Division at the National Grain Center. In their new roles as Operations Research Analysts, they will be responsible for analyzing FGIS program activities for quality assurance, program performance, and program effectiveness. They will prepare and issue QACD quality assurance reports and provide support for the FGISOnline Quality Assurance Control application.

Mr. Hughes began his federal employment in 2014 as a physical scientist for the Inspection Instrumentation Branch at the Technology and Science Division (TSD). He is currently the NIRT/NMR laboratory coordinator and handles the day-to-day operation of the national protein and oil monitoring programs for the Federal Grain Inspection Service. Prior to joining FGIS, Mr. Hughes was a senior laboratory technician at National Feed Commodity where he managed daily laboratory operations, and analyzed liquid cattle feed for protein, oil, moisture and fat. He graduated from Missouri Western State University with a master's degree in chemistry, and bachelor's degrees in chemistry and mathematics with a minor in physics.

Ms. Johnson began her federal career as a Physical Science Technician with the Commodities Testing Laboratory at TSD and operates the Atomic Absorption and the Inductively Coupled Plasma Instruments to analyze corn soy blend and wheat commodities for Iron, Potassium, Calcium, Lead, and Cadmium.

Ms. Johnson is a member of the Signature Process Improvement Committee, Laboratory Information Management Systems Committee, and the Federal Viewpoint Survey Committee. She became the first candidate to finish the Pathways Recent Graduate Program at the National Grain Center in 2014.

Ms. Johnson graduated from Claflin University in Orangeburg, SC in 2009. She was the first woman and second overall to earn a Bachelor of Science degree in Bioinformatics. Ms. Johnson was also the first student to earn a Master's Degree in Health Informatics from the University of Kansas. She was born and raised in Kansas City, Mo.

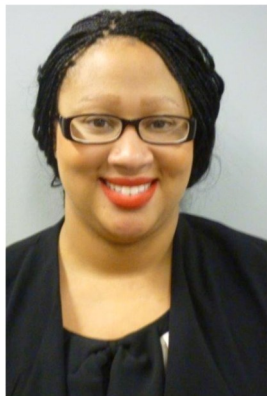


Mr. Andrew Robinson Joins BAR Staff at NGC

KANSAS CITY, Mo.—Mr. Andrew Robinson recently reported to the Board of Appeals and Review (BAR) as a program Assistant. Andrew began his federal employment in 2006 when he joined the US Army as a Military Police Officer. Upon completion of his tour he took a hiatus from the Government until 2014 when he was employed by the United States Postal Service. After deciding that working indoors during the winter was a better option, he joined the BAR's as its new program assistant. Mr. Robinson is a graduate from Upper Iowa University with a bachelor's degree in criminal justice. He was born and raised in South Florida and moved to Kansas City in 2011 with his wife and daughter. Despite the cold weather Mr. Robinson is growing to love Kansas City, especially its sports teams.

GIPSA Employees in the News

New Marketing Specialists, USA Rice Outlook Conference



DES MOINES, Iowa—Two employees recently joined the Packers & Stockyards Program, Midwestern Regional Office (MRO). Ms. Celise Weems is a new marketing specialist at the MRO Business Practice Unit. Ms. Weems relocated from Arkansas where she worked as a contracts analyst at the division of medical services with the state's Department of Human Services. She previously worked as a financial analyst at the University of Arkansas Medical Sciences Center.

Ms. Weems earned a Master of Business Administration degree from the University of Arkansas at Little Rock; a Master of Science in Agricultural Economics from the University of Arkansas; and a Bachelor of Science from the University of Arkansas in Agricultural Business. She also completed several courses at the University of Sao Paulo, Brazil in precision agriculture and biofuels.

Mr. Brett Loughead also joined the MRO Business Practice Unit as a marketing specialist. He is originally from the areas of northern Missouri and southern Iowa, and holds a bachelor's degree in business administration.

Mr. Loughead previously worked for Goretska Show Steers, selling high quality show cattle that were exhibited across the country in competitions ranging from national shows to county fairs.

He also worked as the marketing coordinator for the Missouri National Guard in Jefferson City and covered every aspects of marketing from graphic designs to state demographic break downs to assist National Guard recruiting efforts.



Rice Conference in New Orleans Draws FGIS Inspectors, Scientists, Staff

NEW ORLEANS—Hundreds of rice producers, rice millers, rice equipment manufacturers, researchers and scientists, including Federal Grain Inspection Service (FGIS) staff members, gathered in New Orleans December 9-11 for the annual USA Rice Outlook Conference. Representatives from FGIS and the Technology and Science Division included Mr. Rick Millerd, Board of Appeals and Review; Mr. Tim Norden, Chief Scientist, GIPSA; Ms. Sandra Metheny, Manager, Stuttgart Field Office; Mr. Kent Lanclos, Deputy Director, Technology and Science Division; and Ms. Beverly Whalen, Grain Marketing Specialist. Other FGIS members represented the Policy, Procedures and Market Analysis Branch.



Topics discussed with the USA Rice Millers Association Industry Standards Committee included a pending FGIS request for information about current rice grading standards; an ongoing evaluation of the Zaccaria rice mill; a review of industry milling requirements; and a review of FGIS collaboration with USDA's Agricultural Research Service on testing methods for specific elements in rice.

(Pictured left to right, Ms. Sandra Metheny, Mr. Rick Millerd, Ms. Beverly Whalen
USDA Photo)

GIPSA Employees in the News

GIPSA Administrator Presents 2015 Awards

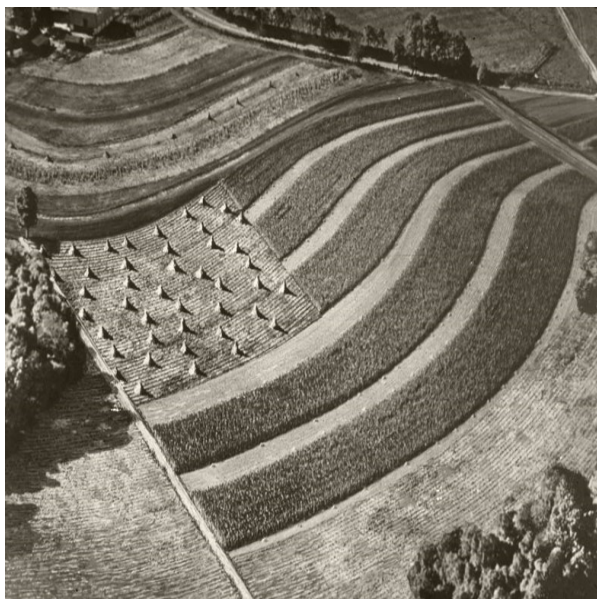


WASHINGTON— Mr. Larry Mitchell presented various categories of the Administrator's Award at USDA headquarters during a ceremony December 15. (Top Left) Deputy Administrator Susan Keith accepts the Administrator's Superior Group Award on behalf of the Packers and Stockyards Program; (Top Right) Ms. Tanika Harris, Information Technology Specialist, receives the Administrator's Superior Individual Award; (Bottom Left) Ms. Candice Harvey is recognized as one of USDA's top Cultural Transformers; (Bottom Right) Mr. Tony Goodeman, acting director, Field Management Division, accepts the Administrator's Distinguished Individual Award on behalf of Mr. Daniel Coy. (USDA Photos)



Employee Benefit News from MBS

Legislation Grants Additional Medical Leave for Newly-Hired Veterans



WASHINGTON—A new law, *The Wounded Warriors Federal Leave Act of 2015* grants certain newly-hired veterans extended medical leave during their initial year in government service.

The legislation affects federal employees who are veterans with a service-connected disability rated at 30 percent or more. The act grants veterans in that category 104 hours of sick leave during their first year of federal service for purposes of medical treatment related to a disability, and for other purposes.

This act impacts veterans hired on or after the date that is one year after the date of enactment of this act—November 5, 2015. The Office of Personnel management has nine months to provide regulatory guidance.

Ms. Lisa Fyall will provide updates on the personnel regulatory guidance. Details about the legislation are available at: <http://lynch.house.gov/sites/lynch.house.gov/files/BILLS-114hr313enr.pdf>

Recruitment and Hiring for Managers and Supervisors on SharePoint

WASHINGTON— The Management and Budget Staff is in the process of developing recruitment and hiring training for managers and supervisors. The training will be a collaborative approach with APHIS staff combining instruction and interactive discussion.

“The goal is to ensure supervisors and managers understand the regulatory guidance through the instruction while addressing GIPSA concerns through interactive discussion. The information will be used to assist the development of the interactive discussion,” said Ms. Lisa Fyall, supervisory management analyst at GIPSA headquarters. Direct additional questions to Ms. Fyall at (202) 720-7045 or e-mail, lisa.fyall@usda.gov

Recruitment and hiring questions, as well as concerns may be posted on the SharePoint page: https://ems-team.usda.gov/sites/GIPSA/OA/_layouts/15/WopiFrame.aspx?sourcedoc=%2Fsites%2FGIPSA%2FOA%2FOADocuments%2FRecruitment%20and%20Hiring%20Questions%2Edocx&action=editnew&IsDlg=1

Questions about Leave Transfer Program? Ask the Personnel Pros at MBS

WASHINGTON—Personnel experts at GIPSA’s Management and Budget Services (MBS) recently shared advice regarding the leave transfer program.

An employee must apply within 90 days of exhausting leave in order to qualify for the program. A recipient must also provide several documents including: a signed and dated application form AD-1046; medical documentation; a brief statement describing the emergency with an explanation about the duration; and a signed and dated leave audit.

The directive is located at: http://www.aphis.usda.gov/mrpbs/publications/hr_desk_guide/4630/4630secj.shtml

For additional information contact Ms. Lisa Fyall at (202) 720-7045 or e-mail, lisa.fyall@usda.gov

A Final Note...

Last Call for Shout-Outs in 2015



Ms. Ana Alvarado
U.S. Army (1992-1996)



CORRECTION—In the November newsletter Ms. Ana Alvarado was incorrectly identified as serving in the U.S. Air Force. She served proudly in the U.S. Army. HOOAH! I apologize for the error and am slowly working off the daily push-ups assigned as demerits for the infraction. —*The Editor*.

Work, Life Balanced? Better Get with the Program

WASHINGTON—The Grain Inspection, Packers and Stockyards Administration (GIPSA) has issued GIPSA Directive 4790.7, *Worklife Program*, dated December 11, 2015. This directive may be viewed, downloaded, or copied from the following internet address: http://gipsa.usda.gov/laws/admin_dir/GIPSA4790-7.pdf

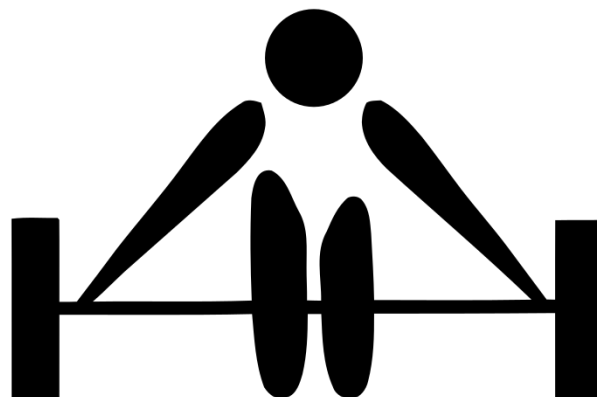
A new section within this directive is: Fitness Center which mentions GIPSA Form 250 that is attached. For added convenience there is a fillable version located on the *inGIPSA* website under *Forms, Commonly Used Forms*:
<https://ingipsa.gipsa.usda.gov/forms/GIPSA-Form-250.pdf>

Direct inquiries regarding this directive to GIPSA, Management and Budget Service, Safety and Occupational Health Manager at (202) 720-0061.

Contact Ms. Terri Henry with questions about GIPSA's issuance management program: (202) 205-8281; or by e-mail: Terri.L.Henry@usda.gov.

Shout-Out to Ms. Terri Henri and Ms. Marianne Plaus

Terri/Marianne – thank you so much for pushing this issue though in time for the post-holiday fitness rush! I know this required some heavy lifting of your own to get it completed. I sent the information to my division folks to highlight the fact that without the FEVS and subsequent listening sessions, this issue might not have been highlighted as clearly as it was – I consider this to be a real FEVS success story. We will be highlighting this in our NGC newsletter as a FEVS success and to underscore that the survey – feedback – action loop really worked in this case! Thanks again! —*Mary Coffey Alonzo*



Issuances

WASHINGTON— The following issuances are in effect immediately: FGIS Directive 4735-2, *Uniform and Identify Apparel and Dress Code Policy* dated October 30, 2015.

FGIS Policy Memorandum Reference No. 264, *Certification of Falling Number Based on Composite Samples*, dated October 30, 2015.

FGIS Program Notice 16-01, *National Export Soybean Sample Collection Plan*, dated October 30, 2015.

